

- Effort to Override President's Veto of Intelligence Authorization Bill Fails in House -

Washington, DC – Yesterday, U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-NY19) voted to override the President's veto of H.R. 2082, the Intelligence Authorization bill. The President vetoed the bill over a provision that would have extended current prohibitions in the Army Field Manual against waterboarding and other torture to U.S. intelligence agencies and personnel.

"Overturning this misguided veto by President Bush would have been a crucial first step toward restoring our moral credibility in the world," said Hall. "We should be telling the world in no uncertain terms: America does not torture."

The House of Representatives voted 225 to 188 to override the President's veto, but a super majority of 290 votes are needed to override a Presidential veto.

"Failing to prohibit by law the use of torture puts American military personnel around the world at risk and undermines America's moral authority," said Congressman Hall. "I am extremely disappointed that President Bush's Republican allies in the House prevented the override of this veto. Intelligence agencies should be required to abide by the longstanding guidelines laid out in the Army Field Manual that have been proven to work in interrogations."

The Army Field Manual embodies the interrogation techniques that have been successfully used by the military. It specifically authorizes 19 interrogation techniques and specifically prohibits 8 techniques – including waterboarding, forced nudity, denial of food and water, and beatings.

General David Petraeus has stated that torture is wrong and that the Army Field Manual works. In an open letter to service members in May 2007, General Petraeus stated, "Some may argue that we would be more effective if we sanctioned torture or other expedient methods to obtain information from the enemy. They would be wrong. Beyond the basic fact that such actions are illegal, history shows that they also are frequently neither useful nor necessary. Certainly, extreme physical action can make someone 'talk;' however, what the individual says may be of questionable value. In fact, our experience in applying the interrogation standards laid out in the Army Field Manual ... shows that the techniques in the manual work effectively and humanely in eliciting information from detainees."